

Eggplant

History

Eggplant is thought to have originated in India. It has been cultivated in China since 600 BC. From China and India, eggplant spread to the Middle East.

Eggplant became a very popular food with Arab people. Eggplant was brought to Europe when the Arabs conquered Spain. Spanish explorers brought the eggplant to the Americas. However, the eggplant was primarily used as an ornament. It was not until the mid-1900s when eggplant was introduced to the US food market. Today, Florida and New Jersey produce the most eggplant in the US. Wisconsin-grown eggplant can be found at farmers markets from July through November.



Language Lesson

The Spaniards called eggplant the “apples of love.” However, Northern Europeans believed that eating eggplant would make you insane and named it the “mad apple.” Other names used for the eggplant include garden egg, aubergine, melanzana (England, France), brinjal (India) and patlican (Turkey).

Fun Facts

- Eggplant is related to potatoes, tomatoes, and peppers
- Eggplants are called a vegetable but are actually a fruit
- Eggplant is an important component of Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, African, and Asian cuisine
- Most eggplant are dark purple but they can be white, lavender, or red-striped
- Young eggplant have edible peels but older plants should be peeled before eating
- China and India produce the most eggplant in the world
- Eggplant is a good source of vitamin B₆
- Eggplant is very sensitive to heat and cold and bruises easily



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